AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please add new claims 39-51, as follows.

1-38. (Cancelled)

39. (New) A method of switching packets, comprising:

providing a network switch for switching packets, the network switch comprising a plurality of blades each coupled to a switch fabric of the network switch through at least one full duplex serial link, whereby the plurality of blades are interconnected via the full duplex serial links and the switch fabric;

serially transmitting, at a rate of at least 2.5 Gb/second, a serial block of data from a first said blade via a first said serial link to the switch fabric, the serial block of data comprising blade identifier information and at least one byte of a said packet destined for a second said blade.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the serial block of data further comprises an identifier of a start of the said packet.

41. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the serial block of data further comprises an identifier of an end of the said packet.

42. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the serial block of data further comprises payload state information and an identifier of an end of the said packet.

43. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the blade identifier information comprises an identifier of the second said blade.

44. (New) A method of switching packets, comprising:

providing a network switch for switching packets, the network switch comprising a plurality of blades each coupled to a switch fabric of the network switch through at least one full duplex serial link, whereby the

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plurality of blades are interconnected via the full duplex serial links and the switch fabric;

serially transmitting, at a rate of at least 2.5 Gb/second, a serial block of data from a first said blade via a first said serial link to the switch fabric;

serially receiving, at a rate of at least 2.5 Gb/second, a serial block of data at a second said blade from the switch fabric,

wherein each said serial block of data comprises in-band control information and at least one byte of a said packet.

45.   (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the in-band control information comprises an identifier of an end of a said packet.

46.   (New) The method of claim 45, wherein the serial block of data further comprises payload state information.

47.   (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the serial block of data further comprises payload state information.

48.   (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the serial block of data tranmitted comprises an identifier of the second said blade.

49.   (New) The method of claim 48, wherein the serial block of data received comprises an identifier of the first said blade.

50.   (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the serial block of data received comprises an identifier of the first said blade.

51.   (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the serial block of data further comprises an identifier of a start of a said packet.

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